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DEFENSE ISSUES

Reserve component forces must be prepared to augment their active duty counterparts at the planning and implementation phases of joint operation. They must be flexible and fully prepared to meet the needs of a changing world.

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Dominating Future Battlefields From Air, Land, Sea and Space

Prepared remarks of Deborah Lee, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif., Jan. 15, 1998.

Less than a decade ago, the driver of a company commander's jeep needed to know how to drive the vehicle and operate its simple radio, which had a power switch and a dial for changing frequencies.

Today, that same driver is in charge of a Humvee, a high-tech vehicle equipped with a sophisticated radio and electronic countermeasures, a global positioning system, a secure mobile phone, night vision goggles and a chemical agent alarm. Astounding advances like these are fueling a revolution in military affairs.

We in the United States have chosen to harness this technology revolution, so that we remain the world's only superpower, and dominate the battlefields of the future from air, land, sea and space. And yet at the same time, we know that technology alone is not enough to keep us strong in the 21st century.

In today's rapidly changing security environment, we must also continue to focus on people and to adapt the education and training of our future military leaders. We must anticipate new challenges and change to meet them. Today's conference is an important step forward in reaching that goal.

How do we equip our future leaders to face the security environment of the 21st century? Let me answer this question from my perspective as Secretary [of Defense William S.] Cohen's principal adviser on reserve affairs.

The reserve components have clearly and repeatedly demonstrated their capability to operate effectively in today's strategic environment. Reserve component personnel are being called upon in more cases and in more places than ever before.

In the Operation Joint Guard theater -- Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary -- and backfill in Germany and United States, nearly one out of every four American soldiers is a member of the National Guard or reserves.

On other fronts, guardsmen and reservists have fought fires in Indonesia and dropped winter feed to snowbound cattle in New Mexico. Thousands were recently called up in the Northeast to help relieve the impact of severe winter storms.

They are constructing roads and hospitals and infrastructure in South America and the Caribbean and forging bonds of alliance with our new partners in Eastern Europe, helping to build a united Europe that is peaceful, prosperous and free.

In short, they are helping on a daily basis to get the total work of the total force accomplished.

In fiscal 1996 alone, RC [reserve component] personnel contributed 13.6 million man-days in support of missions and exercises around the world. And just for comparison, that number during a year of peace equals about one-third of the Gulf War contribution, when more than 250,000 reserve component

personnel were mobilized.

These are important numbers. They show that the reserve components are making the kind of contribution the times demand. They are not just a backup force of last resort, but are needed on a day-to-day basis in peace. And they show that the reserve components are increasingly effective in the post-Cold War world. This is good news.

The other good news is that a decade of increased use has not had a negative impact, at least not yet, on readiness or our ability to meet end strength targets. Attrition figures are stable, and recruiting and employer support remains strong.

These facts and figures aren't just interesting from a theoretical point of view. To the contrary, they directly relate to important policy decisions emanating from the Quadrennial Defense Review -- policy decisions that say we will continue to use the Guard and Reserve when possible to help reduce active component optempo [operations tempo], and we will continue to use the National Guard and Reserve in the future, not only in war but also in peace.

Let me offer you a few recent examples of how we intend to pursue this philosophy of increased use of the Guard and Reserve.

Efforts are currently under way to provide the National Guard with an enhanced capability to support civilian authorities in responding to terrorist use of a weapon of mass destruction. I anticipate that DoD will soon announce a new plan in this area, which is a national follow on to the Guard's long standing role in disaster response here at home.

We've also received some recent marching orders from Secretary Cohen on the subject of active-reserve integration, for it is his belief that maximum integration is key if we are to make our overall strategy work. Congress agrees.

Secretary Cohen has challenged each of the services and the Department of Defense as a whole to identify and tear down any remaining barriers, both cultural and structural, to effective integration between the active and reserve components. Toward that end, a number of recent initiatives have been taken.

Last week, Secretary Cohen announced the establishment of two new two-star positions, recently authorized by Congress to be filled by National Guard and Reserve general or flag officers, who will advise the chairman of the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff].

In November, Secretary Cohen, as part of his Defense Reform Initiative, announced that a National Guard general officer would permanently fill the position of deputy director of military support (DOMS) and that up to one-half of the action officers within DOMS would be drawn from the reserve components. DOMS is the lead DoD agency in supporting civilian authorities in domestic emergencies, including those involving weapons of mass destruction.

Integration continues on other fronts as well. By October 1999, six Army National Guard enhanced readiness brigades will form the core of two new integrated divisions under active Army commanders. And reserve component personnel will soon receive green-color identification cards like their active component counterparts.

Now, in case you're wondering what increased use and integration of the reserve components has to do with the subject of this conference, professional military education, or to use the acronym, PME, the answer is, a lot. As Congressman [Ike] Skelton noted nearly a decade ago, high-quality PME is vital to our national security and an essential investment in future military leadership.

In today's joint environment, when technology is changing the way we work and think, the need for diverse individual and collective skills among soldiers and leaders remains paramount. Given the inherent complexities of jointness, and with ad hoc alliances and coalitions becoming the norm, Joint

PME is now, more than ever, a critical component of military strength.

Simply put, the highest educational standards and opportunities must be maintained for officers assigned to joint elements.

Today, reserve component officers occupy an increasing number of billets in joint organizations, and they are being called upon more frequently to support joint operations. Yet, there is no systematic method for RC officers to obtain JPME beyond the initial level found at intermediate or senior service schools.

One of my goals in the next year is to move toward putting them on a more equal footing with their active duty counterparts. Here's how:

First, we're working with the Joint Staff, National Defense University and the Armed Forces Staff College to assess the possibility of having reserve component officers join the faculties of these institutions.

Second, we are working to begin and/or increase attendance of reserve component officers in establishing JPME courses, like CAPSTONE, in which 16 spaces were allocated to the reserve component for FY [fiscal year] 97. We'll try to do more in the future.

Another example is the Marine Corps University, which has recently begun offering RC officers from all services an opportunity to attend the two-week Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Eight RC officers attended this past summer.

But the availability of billets at JPME courses does not define the issue in its entirety. Even if large numbers of seats were available, civilian commitments of RC personnel prevent attendance at the lengthier residential JPME courses. And in other cases, geographic constraints and money hamper attendance.

So, by July 1999, we hope to implement a new model of JPME for RC officers. [Vice] Adm. [Dennis C.] Blair [director, Joint Staff] and I have formed a working group to review how best to accomplish this goal and, although we don't have it completely figured out yet, we believe that the "book end" model holds particularly great promise. This approach calls for two weeks in residence, followed by a period of distance learning, capped off by another two weeks in residence.

Distance learning, as you know, leverages existing technology to bring more learning to more people in more different locations at less cost. It may provide a ready-made solution to the time-constraint dilemma faced by RC officers who seek advanced JPME. It may also hold the key to keeping costs down for this program.

With each passing year, we are gaining additional experience and confidence in distance learning as an alternative way to train in some – though not all – areas. Distance learning is increasingly being merged with other technologies, like simulations and embedded training, to facilitate warfighting training.

We are also using it to assist in classroom training and education. For example, through distance learning, degree programs are being offered over the Internet and on CD-ROM, and virtual seminars are being held on a global basis.

Within the reserve world, the Army National Guard is at the forefront of distance learning endeavors, helping to create the National Guard Bureau's Distance Learning Network. Using fiber-optic communications, this network integrates state area commands and links them to state armories and public institutions, such as community colleges and fire and police offices. The goal is to build interactive learning centers across the country, within an hour's drive of guardsmen's homes.

And in Maryland, the Army Guard has teamed up with the General Accounting Office to support telecommuting initiatives.

These examples illustrate how we are effectively moving away from classroom-based training and education in some areas. They also give you an idea of how we hope to harness this technology to help create an versatile, affordable and workable approach to reserve JPME.

Let me sum up. Where does all of this leave us? I would offer you a number of propositions.

First, technology may be fueling a revolution in military affairs, but war ultimately remains a human endeavor. Second, all our people -- active, Guard and Reserve -- will need a thorough understanding of the challenges ahead and how to face them.

Active component officers need an appreciation of what 50 percent of their team -- the reserve components -- offer, what their capabilities are, how they contribute to the CinCs and joint task force commanders, and how they are activated and deployed.

For their part, reserve component officers must embrace joint concepts. They must be prepared to augment their active duty counterparts at the planning and implementation phases of joint operations. They must be flexible and fully prepared to meet the needs of a changing world.

To meet the challenges of the 21st century, we will need continuous improvements in professional military education, especially as it pertains to the joint environment. We will need to leverage technology and the power of information to educate and train our people. We will need to use all of our manpower assets -- active, Guard, Reserve and civilian -- to their maximum potential.

And the name of the game will need to be integration, integration and integration.

Thank you very much.

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